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Palmos

OR
PROPHETIC OUTLOOKS
ON PRESENT CONDITIONS

A. Simpson

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Back to Patmos

Prophetic Outlooks
on
Present Conditions

—
By
A. B. SIMPSON
—

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BY

A. B. SIMPSON

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BACK TO PATMOS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE unparalleled conditions in the world today, especially the appalling world-war with all its possibilities of protracted suffering and far reaching complications, combine to give peculiar interest to prophetic study. Like the men of Issachar we should have "understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do." Our blessed Master came back for a second time to revisit the earth on which He had poured out His life and gave to John on Patmos the last prophetic word of the Holy Scriptures, pronouncing a special benediction on those who should read and keep the words of this prophecy and admonishing us that "the time was at hand" and that the fulfilment of these prophetic visions was to be expected in this present age.

In His last prophetic message on the slopes of Olivet He Himself had told us of a time when there should be "on earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and

waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which should happen on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." At the same time He added this special note of hope and warning to His own disciples, "When these things begin to come to pass, lift your heads and look up, for your redemption draweth nigh." These things seem to have already begun to come to pass, and the attitude of the waiting followers of Christ is a very solemn one. It seems fitting that we should turn back to Olivet and Patmos for the "sure word of prophecy unto which we do well to take heed until the day dawn and the daystar arise in our hearts."

It is hoped that this little booklet, gathering up into a focus of light and hope the Master's latest messages concerning His coming, may help us in some measure to "have understanding of the times" and to "lift up our heads and look up" for our redemption which draweth nigh.

OUR PATMOS AND APOCALYPSE.

THE word Apocalypse means "an unveiling," and Patmos was the place where that heavenly vision came to John and may well represent the personal revelation which each of us may expect from our Lord respecting His coming. It was the promise of the departing Master that when we should receive the Comforter, He should "show us things to come." We have no right to expect a new revelation of inspired truth, for the author of the Apocalypse was warned that no one might dare add to the words of this book; but we have a right to expect a personal revelation of the inspired Word to our own hearts and a personal revelation of the Lord Jesus to our spiritual understanding. The apostle Paul prayed for his Ephesian brethren that God would give unto them "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of their heart being enlightened that they might know what is the hope of his

calling and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." We need sight as well as light to enter into the understanding and realisation of spiritual truth. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God, which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, presenting spiritual things to spiritual persons." We have slightly paraphrased this latter sentence so as to bring out the literal force of the original. It is the Spirit filled mind which alone can grasp and realise the truths which the Holy Spirit has already revealed.

It is our privilege, therefore, to ask and receive from the Lord such an illuminating and quickening of our spiritual understand-

ing as will make prophetic truth luminously clear and intensely vivid to our hearts. The Apocalypse is called in the opening paragraph "the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him." That is what we still need, and our first prayer as we take up this study should be that we may each receive our personal Patmos, our individual revelation of Jesus Christ, the coming One, and our Apocalyptic vision of the things which must shortly come to pass. It is one thing to know something about prophetic truth and perhaps talk much concerning it; it is quite another thing to receive from the Lord Himself a personal revelation of this truth and to be able to say,

I am so glad He is coming,
For I know He is coming for me.

Our Patmos Vision.

Our Patmos will bring us in the first place a very distinct and soul stirring vision of the Lord Jesus Himself, for He is presented in this book in the very latest aspects of His ascension glory, His high priestly ministry, and His power and coming.

It will give us in the next place an intel-

ligent understanding of the calling and ministry of the church of Christ, and the story of her progress and declension throughout the Christian age, and the conditions which we may expect to find immediately preceding the return of the Master.

It will give us in the next place an intelligent perspective of the plan of the age and the purpose of God in His dealing with the world and the human race through the present dispensation and in the ages to come.

It will give us also a vivid and impressive conception of the awful forces of evil arrayed against the Son of God and the followers of the Lamb with their final judgment and destruction at His coming.

It will explain to us the tragedies and tribulations of human history and the suffering people of God through the whole course of time and prepare us to understand without discouragement the failure of human governments and even the apostasy of the Church of God oftentimes from the faith once delivered to the saints.

It will make clear to us the one persistent good of prophecy and providence, the one

supreme solution of all the problems of human history, the one only remedy for the ills of humanity, the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ to finish the great work of redemption which He began at Bethlehem and Calvary.

It will also make plain to us the successive stages of His coming, first in His Parousia, to gather His waiting saints to meet Him in the air, and later in His glorious Epiphany to destroy the powers of earth and hell arrayed against Him, to cast out Satan from the earth which he has defiled and destroyed, and to establish for a thousand years His kingdom of peace and righteousness on earth.

And then, in the more distant vista, it will hold out to us the vision of the ages to come, the Great White Throne, the new heavens and earth, and the universe of God reconciled and restored as Christ gives back the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all.

Such a revelation, such an Apocalypse, such a showing to us of things to come will clear away confusion from our minds, will!

comfort our hearts, will establish our faith, and will settle us in the holy purpose to be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord."

A Key to All Truth.

It is not too much to say that the glorious truth of the Lord's Coming is a divine key to unlock all spiritual mysteries and open to us all the chambers of truth and blessing. It is the key to the interpretation of Scripture, and through the failure of a great proportion of the Christian church to understand this truth, the Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel and the kingdom of God have been spiritualized, made void, and practically explained away. It is the key to the world's history. Only as we rightly understand and follow the program of the future given us by Daniel and John can we understand the story of Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Medieval history and modern politics. We need to hold our Bible in the one hand and our newspaper in the other to see how perfectly infinite wisdom

has foreseen and foretold the story of the ages. It is the key to church history, for how otherwise can we understand the apostasies of the past nineteen centuries, the failure of nominal Christianity to evangelise the world, and the apparent defeat of the Master Himself in His conflict with paganism, sin, and Satan? But it is all plain when we understand that His purpose has always been not to convert the world and destroy the devil at this stage, but to gather out of the nations a people for His name, and then bring about the final consummation by His own personal appearing. And, finally, it is the strongest force in Christian life and experience to overcome the power of the world to lift our hearts to things eternal and give to us our citizenship in heaven "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." What else can so comfort us and sustain us amid the trials of life and the distressing shadows that are gathering about this sin-cursed world? Yes, beloved, we need this blessed hope as a daystar in our own hearts and a beacon light along the shores of life.

Let us, therefore, with humble, prayerful, and expectant hearts go back to Patmos and wait for the revelation of Jesus Christ and the vision of things to come.

We have been to Bethlehem and learned what it means to be born again. We have gone "all the way to Calvary" and learned the meaning of the precious blood. We have had our Pentecost in the true sense of that sacred word and received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the anointing of power from on high. Now, shall we have our Patmos, our Apocalypse?

CHAPTER II.

THE CHRIST OF PATMOS.

THE first thing John saw at Patmos was Jesus, and until we see Jesus as John saw Him, and He becomes the center of the picture, all other visions, and especially all prophetic visions will be confusing, misleading, and perhaps only uplifting to our intellectual pride. The vision of Jesus which came to John at Patmos is the latest picture of our beloved and ascended Lord. Sixty years had passed since He parted from them with outstretched hands and words of blessing at Bethany. The Lord Himself had already been in heaven for two generations, and the Christian age as it was to run its course up to His return had fully begun. The Christ of Patmos, therefore, is our Christ, the Christ of the present dispensation, the Christ of today.

A Human Christ.

In the first place the Christ of Patmos is a man. "I turned to hear the voice which

spake, and I saw one like unto a Son of man." This is the literal translation of an unusual Greek form. John had not yet recognised Him as his well remembered Lord. His glory was so surpassing and His whole appearance so changed that he fell at His feet as dead. But as he looked upon Him again, he realised that He was "a Son of man". What a human touch it gives to heaven to know that besides the ransomed saints and glorified children that are there, outnumbering perhaps the very angels, the central figure of the world above is "one like unto a Son of man", Jesus, "this same Jesus", our Brother and everlasting Friend.

A Glorious Being.

But the Christ of Patmos is a being of awful majesty. He is clothed with all the attributes of Deity. His flesh, though human, was like molten brass, His face like the noonday sun, His eyes like flaming stars, His breath like a fiery sword, His head like a great dome of some Alpine cliff, white and glorious, His voice like the mighty ocean, and His raiment a priestly robe with a golden girdle.

And then, when He speaks, His words fall with overpowering majesty. "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last and the coming One. I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Hades and of death." All human authority is at His feet; all past and future ages are in His hand; all worlds hang upon His word. The unseen world is locked and unlocked by His key; and as we gaze upon the vision, we feel like joining in the adoration of the universe, "Blessing and glory and honor and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever."

Our Great High Priest.

The vision of Patmos is a duplicate of the figure of Aaron and his sons as they stood in the ancient sanctuary to make intercession for the sins of the people and to present their worship to Jehovah. The Christ of Patmos is our Mediator, keeping open for us the gates of prayer, keeping shut for us the gates of hell, opening for us the portals of heaven, and representing us as our great Attorney and Advocate before the

throne. "Seeing then, that we have a great high priest that is passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

The Lamb of God.

The Christ of Patmos is the Lamb of God, our crucified Redeemer. "Fear not," He cries, "I am he that liveth and was dead," and from the heart of John goes up the cry which we take up with humble confidence and joy, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion forever and ever." It is the Lamb that rules in the midst of the throne. It is the blood that still overcomes. It is the cross that leads to the crown. It is a Lamb as if he had been slain and not ashamed to bear the marks of Calvary even in the midst of the throne. It is the glorified cross. It is the cross from which He is risen never to die again. Oh, what a light Patmos throws upon the suffering and shame of Calvary!

If we are ever tempted to dishonor that holy symbol of our faith, let us go back to Patmos.

But let us not forget that the cross of Christ is glorified by His resurrection in the vision of Patmos. It is not the "ecce homo" with the nails and thorns, but it is He who can say "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore." And we shall notice that that last sentence is preceded by "behold" and followed by "Amen". With two great notes of exclamation He points to the resurrection as the supreme foundation of our faith and hope. Let us go back to Patmos and learn and realise that Jesus is alive.

The Arbiter of Destiny.

The Christ of Patmos holds the keys of Hades and of death. The underworld is subject to His control. No one can die till Jesus turns that key, and at the portals of the unseen world He waits to receive the spirits of His own. He settles all questions of future destiny. He holds in His hand the book of life. He opens the seals of your future and the future of the world. Be-

loved, have you put your future in His hands and committed your trust to Him against that day?

The Head of the Church.

The Christ of Patmos is the Lord of the kingdom and the Master of every Christian minister and worker. He walks in the midst of the golden lamps. He holds the seven stars in His hands. He attends our prayer meetings and our preaching services. He listens to every testimony and every sermon. He sits with us in our studies as we prepare our sermons. He watches our assemblies and our conventions. He knows if we are cold or hot, true or false. Oh, beloved, it will solemnise our hearts and spiritualise our ministry to go back to Patmos.

The Heart Searcher and the Judge

This is the peculiar feature of the Patmos revelation. Here we find no easy going indifference to the spiritual condition of His people, but we see One whose eyes are as a flame of fire, One who tries the hearts and

the reins, One who is ever saying, "I know thy works". He is quick to appreciate the good and say, "I know thy works and thy patience, and the last to be more than the first". But He is just as quick to say "I have it against thee because thou hast left thy first love. I will come unto thee and fight against thee with the sword of my mouth. Because thou art lukewarm I will spue thee out of my mouth."

How thankful we ought to be that He is judging us now that we may escape the judgment when He comes. It is like the judge taking you into his office and pointing out your fault, and giving you a chance to rectify it before the court shall be convened. Oh, let us respond to this all seeing Friend, "Search me, O God, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

The Coming One.

The Christ of Patmos adopts that solemn name, I am the coming One. This is the keynote of every chapter. "Behold, He cometh with clouds!" is the opening an-

nouncement. "Behold, I come quickly!" is the last warning note. "Even so, come Lord Jesus" is the true response.

That single phrase, "the coming one," is a mile post showing the way to the interpretation of the book. We find it in the ascriptions of praise to Him through the early chapters. Even in the fourth chapter, which many interpreters have assumed describes the Rapture of the Church and the Parousia of the Lord, we find in the eighth verse that the song that they sing closes with that great sentence, "the coming one". We know, therefore, that He has not come, and that the interpretation must be wrong. But in the eleventh chapter and the seventeenth verse, according to the corrected reading, that phrase is left out of the heavenly song, "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art and wast" because He has now come, "and the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

The announcement of His coming runs as a golden thread through all His seven

letters to the churches of Asia, which we shall see represent the successive stages of the Christian church from the time of John to the end of the age. In the first three He never speaks of His second coming. It was not due then. He said He would come to them and remove their candlestick out of its place. That is coming in providence. That is not the Advent. When He comes to the last three churches, He talks about His second coming. How solemnly He tells Sardis, "I will come as a thief," and surprise you in your unprepared state. He tells Philadelphia, "Behold, I come quickly, hold fast that thou hast that no man take thy crown." He tells Laodicea, that worthless, lukewarm embodiment of indifference and putridity and death, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." I am here, I have come. My hand is on the latch. Already "I have sat down upon My throne," and I am just waiting to seat by My side the overcomers. "Unto him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am sat down with my Father upon his throne." He is at the

door. There is just a moment more before it will be too late to enter; and then comes that last, that surpassing burst of tenderness. Just as He is about to close the age, just as the trumpets of the Advent are about to break upon the world, His great compassionate heart falters for a moment, and He says, "I will give another chance, I will give another invitation," and bending over He cries, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and take him up to sup with me." It is the last call. May God help us to heed it before the judgment breaks.

We quote, with much appreciation, this paragraph from a recent writer:

"The Christ of the Revelation is a very different manifestation from the Christ of the Gospels or the Epistles. In the Gospels He is the lowly traveler, toiling, teaching, until His strength is gone. In the Epistles He is invisible. The world knows Him only on evidence. He is sitting at God's right hand in expectancy, and by His church beseeching them to be reconciled to God. He

is patiently bearing man's neglect and profanity. His people are persecuted and killed, and He makes no sign of displeasure or even knowledge. They cry to Him and He waits long before avenging their wrongs, His truth is denied and villified and He is silent. The world takes possession of the fairest portions of earth and turns them into scenes of sin and cruelty, and He appears to see it not. In the Apocalypse all is changed. Christ is no longer sitting, but in every form of activity. He is the Christ of energy. He is coming in clouds, riding on horse back, leading armies, smiting down evils, taking vengeance upon all foes, calling the dead to life, summoning the world to judgment, and dealing out justice with a high hand. He is seen leading His people in triumph, openly rewarding them, and crowning them with glory."

(Greater Life and Work of Christ. Dr. Alexander Patterson).

CHAPTER III.

THE PERSPECTIVE.

IT will help us in the study of this Patmos vision to gather out of the great mass of light and shadow some clear points of sequence to form a kind of perspective of the things that are to come, and the structure of the book itself with reference to the order of events.

The Church.

The second and third chapters give us a progressive picture of the condition of the church down to the Laodicean age with its wide spread apostasy and the Lord's intimations to it of His speedy coming. It has been said by some interpreters that the church does not appear again after the third chapter, and it is assumed by many that from the beginning of the fourth chapter the saints have already been translated, and all the events that follow have to do with a churchless world and the very last period of time. This seems very forced and we believe is contradicted by the language of the

heavenly beings in the fourth chapter and eighth verse who address the Lord Jesus as yet to come. The church does appear in the woman clothed with the sun, chapter twelve and in the one hundred and forty-four thousand of chapter fourteen.

The Throne and the Seals.

In the fourth chapter the scene is changed from earth to heaven, and we behold the Lord Jesus as the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb slain assuming the leadership in the mighty events which are to result in His coming. He takes the scroll of seven seals which appears to represent the plan of God for the ages, a plan which He alone can interpret and fulfill. And as He opens the successive seals, the procession of events moves onward through the opening of the seven seals until in the close of the sixth chapter the signs of His immediate coming are shaking both earth and heaven. The events represented by these successive seals appear to cover the whole course of the Christian age. The first seal introduces a white horse with a conquering rider and suggests the triumphs of the

gospel. The second with the red horse suggests the dreadful wars which are to mark the whole period of time. The third, a black horse, is the symbol of famine which always comes in the track of war. The fourth, a pale horse, stands for pestilence and devastation of every kind. The fifth seal opens to us a vision of the martyrs of the early centuries and the later persecutions. And the sixth seal brings us to the very eve of the Advent and the preternatural disturbances and catastrophes which foreshadow some awful and impending crisis. It would seem as if the Lord's coming had already begun.

The Halting of the Catastrophe.

Suddenly all these commotions and convulsions are arrested, and the angels of judgment are commanded to hold back the winds until certain imperative conditions have been provided for. The first of these is the sealing of a select number of the tribes of Israel that they shall be able to go safely through the awful ordeal that is immediately to follow. The Jews are to remain on earth and go through the flood like

Noah and his sons and come out on the other side as the pioneers of Israel's future kingdom.

The Translated Ones.

Suddenly a second picture flashes before our vision, the great multitude not of Jews but of saints from all nations and kindreds and people and tongues appears in the presence of the Lamb clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. "And they cry with a loud voice, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb." Surely these are the translated ones, and in answer to the question, "Who are these, and whence came they?" one of the elders answers "These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

The Tribulation.

They have just escaped that dreadful time of trouble which had been impending upon the earth, and now that they are removed the tempest bursts and through the

eighth and ninth chapters a series of mysterious and supernatural judgments continues to fall upon the earth culminating in the eleventh chapter and the thirteenth verse with a great earthquake and scenes of terror amid which the wicked multitudes at length break down in fear and give glory to the God of heaven.

The Coming of the King and Kingdom.

The seventh angel sounds his trumpet and in response there goes up a mighty cry, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ." This is the consummation and the glorious appearing of the Lord.

Special Pictures.

But there are many scenes and incidents in this mighty progression which have been lightly passed over, and the great seer pauses for a few chapters and gives us a number of special pictures of these particular movements and conditions which are to precede the glorious consummation just described.

The Glorious Woman.

The first of these pictures is the woman clothed with the sun. This symbol represents the church of God and her glorious Seed, the Son of God, the Manchild whom she brings forth amidst the hate of the dragon and who is caught up to God and His throne.

The Casting Out of Satan.

The ascension of Jesus means the expulsion of the devil. Cast out from heaven, he settles down upon the earth with his demon hosts and wages war against the woman and the Lamb. He is represented as a red dragon, and his skill and power are back of all the human developments that fill the story of the ages.

The Wild Beast.

His first creation is a wild beast in his own image representing the political powers of earth as they represent him in his conflict with the kingdom of God. (Rev. xiii).

The Other Beast.

Then comes the picture of the other wild

beast, the ally of the first, representing the false religions of the world and the great apostasy.

The Holy Ones.

Next in the fourteenth chapter we have a number of pictures, the first of which is a company of one hundred and forty-four thousand. These are not Jews as in chapter seven, but they are the saints of God on earth who "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" and are "the first fruits" who await His coming. (Rev. xiv:1-5).

The Worldwide Evangel.

Next, we have a picture of witness bearing to every kindred and tribe and tongue (ch. xiv:6-7), reminding us of Christ's own sign of the approaching end in Matthew xxiv:14 "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come."

The Harvest of the Earth.

Later in the chapter, verses 14-16, is a beautiful vision of the Son of man on a

cloud reaping the harvest of the earth and gathering the ripe grain of His holy followers to the garner above.

The Wine Press.

The chapter closes with the companion picture of the wine press of the wrath of God, another sharp sickle gathering not the grain but the purple grapes of sin and treading them under the wine press of the wrath of God. This is an echo of the great tribulation about to come.

The Seven Last Plagues.

These judgments are finally represented in seven vials of wrath poured out on various representatives of the evil powers of earth and hell. These judgments appear to belong not to the tribulation time but to the last days of the present age and the convulsions and shakings that are to lead up to the tribulation and to be interrupted for a moment by the Parousia of the Son of man.

The Thief in the Night.

Suddenly in the midst of these seven plagues and just before the last one comes

a whispered message full of deep solemnity (ch. xvi:15). "Behold, I come as a thief." This is doubtless the signal for the waiting bride. Immediately afterwards the seventh vial brings the crowning judgment.

The Fall of Babylon.

The seventeenth and eighteenth chapters present this vision in great fulness. Whether it has reference only to mystical Babylon, the great spiritual apostasy of the ages, led by Rome and gathering into its broad current all the false teaching of our age both Protestant and pagan, or whether it applies also to a literal Babylon and a last political confederation of the nations, we do not stop to argue here. It is enough to note the place of this series of events in the great perspective.

The Coming of the King.

The nineteenth chapter of Revelation takes up the thread that was interrupted in the eleventh chapter, and the sublime panorama moves on after these special intervening scenes. The armies that were in heaven marched forth behind the Son of

God. The armies of the adversary gather for the final conflict, and the powers of earth and hell are broken and scattered like the dust of the threshing floor, and their leaders bound and cast into the lake of fire and the bottomless pit.

The Thousand years.

Then comes the millennial morning, the first resurrection, the rewards of the righteous and the glorious kingdom of righteousness and peace for a thousand years.

The Last Revolt.

But Satan is only bound, not converted. In his infinite mercy God gives him one more probation, but the moment he is loose, he lifts the standard of rebellion and rallies to his ranks the discontented spirits of the earth, gathering an army like the sands of the sea. But in a moment they are smitten with fire from heaven, and Satan himself is now cast without respite or hope into the lake of fire, and his followers are devoured by the fiery judgments of the Lord.

The Great White Throne.

Now comes the final judgment. The souls of the wicked that have slept on through the thousand years are raised from the dead in shame and condemnation. The myriads of the past are gathered before the throne. The judgment is according to works and strict, inexorable justice, and "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The New Heavens and Earth.

Then comes a new creation, a new heaven and earth, and the glory of the eternal ages (Rev. xxi:22).

This is the perspective; this is the plan of the ages; this is the vision of Patmos; this is the magnificent vista that opens before our faith and hope.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PATMOS VISION OF THE CHURCH.

THE seven churches addressed by the Lord Jesus in the second and third chapters of Revelation undoubtedly represent seven types of religious life, and each has its counterpart among the Christians of today.

Seven Types.

The church in Ephesus represents an active and orthodox ecclesiastical body but one whose spiritual life is really declining and which the Lord condemns for having left its first love. The church in Smyrna is wholly different. The name means myrrh and stands for sweetness, fragrance, and godliness. It represents suffering, patience, and faithfulness. The church in Pergamos represents the worldly type. Its dwelling is where Satan has his seat, and Satan's throne is this present evil world.

In the midst of influence, wealth, and culture it has fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, the unholy doctrines of the Nicolaitanes, and the more corrupt teachings of Balaam. The church in Thyatira, while having many good works, has fallen into ritualism, spiritualism, and the "depths of Satan." Worldly philosophy has undermined its faith and godliness, and it is full of that false mysticism that cloaks wickedness under the guise of spiritual leading, commits sin in the name of the Holy Ghost, and claims indulgence for evil by religious ceremonies. It is not hard to trace it in Romanism, ritualism, and spiritism. The church in Sardis has reached a lower level and a more stereotyped condition as the result of these errors. It has a name to live and makes great professions, but it is dead. It is represented by the spirit of formalism today.

The church in Philadelphia marks a sudden contrast. It is the church of revival and loyalty to Christ and His Word. It is a feeble church and has little strength, but

an open Bible, an open door, a world-wide evangelism, and a supreme love to the Lord Jesus Christ. The last picture, Laodicea, represents prosperity, popularity, self complacency, respectability, ease, moderatism, and utter indifference and lukewarmness. It is conformed to the spirit of the age. But Christ Himself is outside and has already rejected it as utterly nauseating and intolerable, and turning away from it, He addresses His promises to the few faithful overcomers who still remain. These seven types of religious character are to be found in every age among churches and individual Christians, and in this sense they are permanent and enduring types.

Historical Epochs.

But, it is the judgment of a great number of interpreters that they also represent seven prophetic eras of historical Christianity.

Ephesus.

This church represents conditions prevalent in the late apostolic age. The church still retained much of the life inspired

through the ministries of Paul and John, but already even Paul was complaining that all that were in Asia had turned away from him, and John wrote that "Diotrephes who loved the pre-eminence" had refused to receive him. We are therefore prepared for the Master's very clear distinction between the good works and orthodox teachings of this church, and the spiritual decadence which had begun in their lapse from their first love.

Smyrna.

Smyrna represented the age of persecution which closed with the third century. "Thou shalt have persecution ten days" appears to allude to the ten great persecutions of the early centuries. Certainly the second period of church history was a period of suffering, martyrdom, and glorious fidelity to Christ as described in the Lord's epistle to Smyrna.

Pergamos.

The church of Pergamos well represents the period that followed the triumph of Constantine and the great Council of Nice.

Christianity became the established religion of the Roman Empire, and the men that were scarred with long persecution were suddenly translated to positions of high, social, and political influence. Heathen temples were transformed into Christian sanctuaries. The spirit of the world became mingled with the gatherings of the church, and the doctrines of Balaam were reproduced in an age of compromise which, alas, has continued down to the present time.

Thyatira.

The spirit of the world was followed by the spirit of the devil. The most dreadful expression in the Lord's description of Thyatira is "the depths of Satan" and the dark figure which stands out in the center of the picture is "that woman Jezebel which calleth herself a prophetess." This church may well represent the Roman apostasy which followed the age of Constantine and all the superstitions and corruptions which have come through her false teachings and unhallowed spirit.

Sardis.

Historical Christianity has no sadder, darker picture than the middle ages when the very light of revelation had almost disappeared, and the description of Sardis was so literally fulfilled, "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." And yet even then there were "a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments" and Wyckliffe, Cranmer, Huss, and Luther were living protests against the evils of their time.

Philadelphia.

It is also a matter of simple historical record that the Reformation burst upon the world like a sunrise in the very midnight of this apostasy. How truly this is described in the letter to the church at Philadelphia. It was a feeble movement at first. "Thou hast a little strength." Its watchword was the Bible. "Thou hast kept my word." The object of its testimony was the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. "Thou hast not denied my name." Its spirit continues among the true followers of the Lord Jesus

to the end of the age, and its peculiarity is that it has a pre-millennial testimony. It is looking for the Lord's coming. Its promise is "I will keep thee from the hour of tribulation that is coming upon all the earth," and its note of warning is "Behold, I come quickly. Hold that fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown."

Laodicea.

This is the last stage of nominal Christianity. It represents the apostasy of Protestantism and the flood of liberalism that is already covering Christendom. The Lord has ceased to recognise it as His church, for it is the church of the Laodiceans. It belongs to them and they can have it. "I will spue thee out of my mouth" is His awful word of rejection. Christ is outside its doors and knocking not for the church to respond, but for the few faithful overcomers that still remain to hearken and come out. It is not hard to recognise the picture in the Christian world today. It is very sad. It is very true.

But all through these seven pictures we

find a church within a church, a little minority, a company whom the Lord addresses as the overcomers. There are some in every church and every age, and it would seem the Lord Jesus has ceased to expect the body as a whole to be saved, and as in the last days of the Old Testament, He is gathering out individuals, the men and women who have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches and who are found true to Him amid surrounding corruption and shall sit down with Him on His throne, even as He overcame and is sat down with the Father on His throne.

Beloved, have we an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, and shall we be found among the overcomers?

CHAPTER V.

THE PAROUSIA AND RAPTURE

THE coming of our blessed Lord to the thoughtful student of the prophetic Scriptures falls into two sections. First, He will come for His own as a thief in the night and gather them to meet Him in the air. Then after an interval occupied in part no doubt by the judgment of the saints and the assignment of the servants of the Lord to their respective places and ministries in the coming kingdom, He will descend with them in power and great glory to establish His kingdom visibly upon the earth for a thousand years and to give them various places of authority and service as they reign with Him upon the earth.

The first of these comings is very definitely described by the apostle in the closing verses of the epistle to the Thessalonians. The Lord Himself frequently referred to it when He admonished His disciples to watch "for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Sometimes both aspects of His coming seem to blend. In the

first chapter of Revelation and the seventh verse "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him," the writer is referring to His public appearing with His saints at the beginning of the millenium. But in His promise to the church in Philadelphia, "Behold I come quickly, hold fast that thou hast that no man take thy crown" he refers to His first coming for His own. In the previous verse he had distinctly alluded to the great tribulation and had promised immunity from its terrors to this faithful church, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which cometh upon all the earth to try them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth." In the sixteenth chapter of Revelation after the pouring out of the sixth vial and just before Armageddon there is no doubt that the Master's secret whisper to His waiting followers has reference to His Parousia. "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his

garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame." The thief does not come with sounding trumpets but stealthily and unrecognised by ordinary observers. So the Lord's coming for His bride will be as a surprise to the slumbering world and for us He says it shall be "in such an hour as ye think not." The thief does not steal away the whole house, but he only takes the treasures out of it. And so the coming of the Lord will leave much behind. We fear it will leave many Christians, many churches, many ministers, many astonished, disappointed, and heart-broken men and women. Therefore, "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

But it seems to us that the particular vision of the translated ones is in the seventh chapter of Revelation from the 9th to the 17th verses. It is not introduced by any narrative but suddenly flashes upon our vision like a glorious epiphany. "I beheld a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne

and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands." Some writers would have us believe that this is a special company of later saints that come up in the closing days of the great tribulation. This multiplying of translations and raptures is very confusing. We have no hint anywhere of a second rapture, and in the light of other Scriptures it is most natural to assume that this is the glorious company to whom all prophecy has long looked forward. If it be objected that these are described as coming up out of the great tribulation, we see nothing difficult whatever in this objection. That catastrophe had really begun. Its awful signs were so disturbing that the wicked had already begun to call upon the rocks and the mountains to fall on them, and only a special command from heaven had arrested the dreadful convulsion. It is hinted in other places that we shall see the beginning of that time of trouble. But its real force does not begin until the eighth chapter when the seven angels go forth to sound the tribulation trumpets.

How glorious is the vision of this happy company! They have escaped the tribulation. They have kept their garments white. They wear the palms of victory. They have overcome in the conflicts and temptations of life. They have at last reached their home. They are before the throne of God. "They shall hunger no more nor thirst any more." Their tears shall be wiped away. They shall serve Him day and night in His temple. He shall dwell among them and lead them unto living fountains of waters. God grant that we may be found in that happy company when Jesus comes.

We are not to go through the tribulation but are to watch and pray always that we may escape these things that are coming to pass and stand before the Son of man.

Surely the signs of that time of sorrow are gathering fast.

"Earth, what a sorrow lies before thee,
None like it in the ages past."

But for us the darkness only tells us that the dawn is near. "Let us therefore not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober."

The translated saints are again described in Rev. xiv :1-5. This company of one hundred and forty-four thousand represents by that number a special and elect company. While the number is the same as in the seventh chapter where the tribes of Israel are described, they evidently belong to the whole Christian church. They are described as "redeemed from the earth" not from the children of Israel. They are a holy people represented as virgins, not with any intended reflection on the human relationship of marriage, but to indicate their separation to God. They are marked by obedience for "they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." There is no compromise in their fidelity. They are blameless in their conversation, for "In their mouth was found no guile, and they are without fault before the throne of God." Especially are they an heavenly minded people in close communion with the skies, for they alone can understand the song which the harpers are singing in heaven. Already their hearts are there, and they have learned the language of the sky. It would seem also

that they are a missionary people, for immediately afterwards comes the picture of an angel or messenger flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto every nation, and tongue, and kindred, and people.

And they are a translated band. "I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple crying with a loud voice. Thrust in thy sickle and reap, for the time is come for thee to reap for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped."

Once more we behold the followers of the Lamb under the image of the bride in Rev. xix:7. "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he said unto me,

write, Blessed are they that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." We are not told at what period this blessed festival shall be held. In the parables of our Lord it is closely associated with the judgment of the servants immediately after the coming of the Lord. It would appear to belong to the time between the translation and the glorious appearing. There will be an interval between those two events with many dreadful things occurring on the earth and doubtless many glorious things taking place in the world above. One of these will doubtless be the accounting of the servants to their Master, and the assigning of them to their various places in the kingdom about to come. Then, perhaps, will be celebrated that transcendent union of the Son of God with His beloved church foreshadowed by the sweetest and purest figure of earthly happiness. What an hour of rapture it will be for Him and for us! Oh, that we might have the wedding robe and the wedding heart! The garments of the bride are here described as "granted" to her. Holiness is the gift of God's grace. They are further

represented as "both clean and white," the first denoting purity, the second, glory. It is the linen after it has been laundered. It is the heart that has not only been washed in the blood but refined by the fire. Beloved, that is the meaning of our trials now. God is preparing us to be brought unto the King "in raiment of needlework," beautiful through His comeliness and transfigured as well as translated.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVIL.

THE development of evil has a large place in the Patmos vision.

The Devil.

First, the devil himself meets us even in the letters to the seven churches where we read of "the depths of Satan" in Thyatira and the persecutions in Smyrna. In the twelfth chapter he moves to the center of the stage appearing as "a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads, and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth." He is a great king and has a great court and retinue like the mighty kingdoms that represent him on this earth. The stars that he draws in his trail are the fallen angels that followed him in his great rebellion, or the Christian ministers whom he has seduced or terrified from their allegiance to Christ.

The Woman Clothed with the Sun.

Next we see a glorious woman clothed with the sun and about to be delivered of a wonderful Man Child, or Male Child, who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. And the dragon is waiting to devour her Child as soon as it is born. This woman by common consent represents the Church of God of both the Old Testament and the New, the one company of God's elect in all ages. And her glorious Seed must surely be the Son of God, the true "Seed of the woman," and the most glorious product of the Church in all ages. We know there are many Bible teachers who hold that this Man Child represents a special generation of saints, the overcomers of the last time. But without going into controversy on this matter it is sufficient to say that it seems a most strained interpretation; and that as we follow the picture, it will be seen how naturally and fully all the facts connected with the birth, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus correspond with the vision.

The Man Child is born and delivered

from the wrath of the Dragon as Christ was saved from the murderous hate of Herod and the devil, and is caught up to God and His throne. This was all fulfilled in the resurrection and ascension of the Son of God.

Satan Cast Out of Heaven.

Then comes a mighty conflict in the heavens. The dragon faces the supreme crisis of his great rebellion. The ascension of the Son of God naturally brings to an end his right of access to the heavenly world. Under the Old Testament we find him in the story of Job coming with the sons of God into the presence of Jehovah and bringing his accusations against Job before the very throne. But now that Christ has died and risen and settled all the claims of justice against His people there is no place left for "the accuser of the brethren" in the court above. Therefore, there is war in heaven, and Michael, representing the Son of God, with his angels, overcomes the dragon and hurls him from the heavenly court, precisely as the judge in an earthly court would drive out the accusing

attorney if the case against his client had been settled. This is the significance of the shout of the apostle in the eighth chapter of Romans, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." And so the shout echoes through the heavens, "Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before our God day and night." Surely this is the position that a believer enjoys today. Satan is no longer in heaven as our accuser, but he is on earth as our inexorable foe. Therefore the heavens exclaim, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath because he knoweth that his time is short."

Next we see this dreadful being making war with the woman and the remnant of her seed. How natural it is to apply this to the persecutions of the Church under pagan and papal Rome!

The God of This World.

The relation of Satan to the forces of evil abroad in the earth, and especially to the great political powers of earth, is made plain in the passage already referred to, Rev. xiii :2. After describing the wild beast that came up out of the sea at Satan's call we are told "the dragon gave him his power and his seat and great authority." Satan is the ruler of this world, and he is making the most of his opportunity during the closing days of the Christian age. Cast out of heaven his activities are limited to the earth and the air, and he is working in the minds of men and the governments of the world for the accomplishment of his ancient purpose against the Lord and His Christ.

In the thirteenth chapter and first verse he is represented as standing upon the sands of the sea, calling forth his great executive and instrument through whom he is to wage his bitter war against the Seed of the woman and the followers of the Lamb. Later in the Apocalypse we meet him again as the leader of the hosts of evil in their last conflict against the Lamb of God. After

this final battle of Armageddon a mighty angel comes down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand, and lays hold upon the dragon, that old Serpent, the Devil, and Satan, and binds him for a thousand years and shuts him up in the bottomless pit so that he shall deceive the nations no more till the thousand years shall be fulfilled. (Rev. xx:1-3).

What a world it will be some day in the happy millennial years when we shall know at last that Satan is bound and that we are dwelling in an age without a cemetery and without a devil!

His End.

At length those glorious years roll by, and once more we meet the adversary. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for battle, the number of whom is as the sands of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camps of the saints

about, and the beloved city, and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." (Rev. xx:7-10).

The World Powers.

Satan's chief executive in the accomplishment of his purposes of evil is a Wild Beast, called forth by him from the sea which represents the masses of humanity. This beast is an exact copy of himself, having seven heads and ten horns, and ten crowns upon the horns.

This wild beast represents the political governments of earth, especially in the last form which was in existence in the days of the Patmos vision. The other heads had passed and now Rome represented the later evolutions of the wild beast power. The ten horns denote no doubt the final and separate kingdoms and peoples into which Rome was eventually to break up. We find this beast again in the

seventeenth chapter of Revelation carrying the great false church under the image of a harlot. But now the horns are without their crowns (Rev. 17:3). It would seem that in their final form these world powers are ultimately to become democracies. Indeed, it is not hard to see that the crowns are already disappearing and republicanism is rapidly growing among the nations.

The Antichrist.

These separate kingdoms and democracies are to fulfil their respective courses through the age as they are doing today. They are yet to head up in a personal leader who will unite all the features of this vision. This Wild Beast is represented ultimately obtaining worldwide dominion over all men, and exercising the most absolute and cruel despotism. He demands universal homage. He controls all business trade and commercial life. He requires all men to wear the open badge of submission to his authority. He claims the right to control the religious opinions

and worship of mankind. In his final form he is the Superman, the Antichrist, the great Lawless One, who has loomed through all the portentous figures of human history, but has never yet materialised in the awful, ultimate features which stand out from the vision of Patmos. Nimrod, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Nero, Diocletian—even the bloodiest of the popes of Rome are but shadows and foretypes of this last dread form, “that Wicked whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.”

The Alliance of Politics and Religion.

The world powers, represented by this Wild Beast, are seen in the seventeenth chapter of Revelation as carrying the great Harlot, representing the False Church. Afterwards they turn against her and rend her. It is easy to remember how long the governments of Europe supported Papal Rome with the power of the sword, and how, later, they turned against her, robbed her of her temporal power, and treated her as an enemy of human liberty.

Armageddon.

In the sixteenth chapter of Revelation we see three demon spirits going forth into the world and rallying the nations for the last great conflict, Armageddon. We are not told how they are to do this. It is not hard, however, to understand how Satan by his politics and philosophies can bring about such results. Indeed, the present European war is, by many, charged, in a large degree, so far, at least, as Germany is concerned, to the insidious theories of Nietzsche and Treitschke and the exaltation of the law of might against right.

No word has been more frequently quoted in the last few years in discussing public events and prophetic questions. It has been greatly abused and misused. It has come to represent in popular vocabulary any great fight. It is often applied to the great war which at this writing is shaking the world. Literally and strictly speaking Armageddon relates to a special locality, the valley of Megiddo in the plains of Palestine where Josiah fought his last fatal battle and where many of the great

decisive conflicts of the past were settled. The battle of Armageddon distinctly foretold in the Patmos vision is to be the last conflict between the Son of God and the confederated forces of evil. It is to be fought in Palestine against the invaders of the land and the army besieging Jerusalem. That conflict will be led by Satan and Antichrist, and it will sum up and close for a time at least the age-long struggles of evil against the Lord. In the strictest sense, therefore, no other great campaign can be called Armageddon.

The Beginning of the End.

But coming events cast their shadows before and ultimate issues start in earlier currents and movements. There is a sense, therefore, in which Armageddon begins in the series of conflicts between the forces of evil and the Son of God throughout the closing years of this dispensation. We are justified therefore in gathering up these varied lines as they converge to this one, great, last tragedy. What are the things which according to the Patmos vision lead up to Armageddon?

God's Judgments on the Nations.

The sixteenth chapter of Revelation gives us a vision of the special judgments which lead up to Armageddon. Seven angels of judgment are sent forth with seven vials of wrath to be poured out upon the earth. These do not constitute the Tribulation, but lead up to it. They evidently precede the Parousia and Rapture, for that is announced just before the seventh vial. The first five vials appear to refer to the terrible wars which during the past century have deluged the world with fire and blood, and especially affected Roman Catholic countries. The sixth vial is poured out upon the great river Euphrates and brings the end of the Turkish power that the way of the Jews as the future rulers of the East may be prepared. It brings also an incursion of unclean frog spirits, no doubt including modern Spiritualism, Rationalism, Socialism, and false philosophy, to prepare men's minds for "the battle of the great day of God Almighty."

The Thief in the Night.

Then comes the whispered note of warn-

ing, "Behold, I come as a thief," followed no doubt by the Rapture of the saints. And then comes Armageddon. The advent of Turkey into the present war, and the doom into which she appears to have plunged herself, and the awful fruits already apparent of the false teaching of our cultured and Christless age—these may well make us listen for that Advent call. "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

False Religious Systems

It remains only to add that the third of the great forces of evil traced through this wonderful Apocalyptic vision comprises the false religions of the world. These are represented by one portentous figure, the False Prophet, by another strange form, the second Beast of Rev. 13, and by a powerful religious system described as the great Harlot and later as Mystical Babylon.

The Harlot.

The vision of the Apocalypse gives a cen-

tral place to an evil woman seated upon the throne of earthly power and holding under her baneful spell the myriads of earth. The reference of this to the papacy is unmistakeable. Papal Rome has played the part of Mystical Babylon and the great Harlot for more than a thousand years. We have seen her temporal power broken, but her spiritual power through a mighty democracy is perhaps greater in the world than ever before. It would only need a leader of the caliber of Hildebrand to weld her mighty system into the greatest social, religious and political force on earth. We need not exclude from this combination of false religion even our boasted Protestantism. There is much in the spirit of the modern church that is not far from a complete alliance with the spirit of Rome. All that is needed is a combination of Modernism, Liberalism, Superstition, and Jesuitism to give us at least in his latest form the second Wild Beast of Revelation 13.

The Other Beast.

This creature with "two horns like a lamb" but a voice "like a dragon" also re-

fers, no doubt, primarily, to Papal Rome. But as Papacy was but the embodiment of Apostasy, we are warranted in including under the figure of the False Prophet of Revelation all the false religious systems that have cursed the age and deceived the nations, and which the political powers of the world have used as instruments of their ambition and tyranny. These are to work their latest will in the demon spirits that go out from the Dragon, the Wild Beast, and the False Prophet to call the world to Armageddon and are to share the common judgment that follows the coming of the Lord.

The Apostate Church.

The darkest picture of the Apocalypse is the apostasy of the church. Foregleams of this run all through the letters to the seven churches of Asia until at last in Laodicea we find conditions ripe for the rejection of the Master and the judgments of His wrath. We only need to turn to the history of Christianity to find these conditions paralleled in the religious world today. When men like Dr. Munhall have to

sound a note warning against the poisonous literature and pernicious influence of his own beloved church, and when intelligent and unprejudiced observers tell us that through the rationalistic teaching of the German leaders, the theological seminaries of that land were almost empty a year ago, and when the religious statistics of the foremost Christian nation in the world show an actual loss of one per cent in the membership of the churches, we seem not far from the midnight cry. When Christianity lost its vitality in its ancient centers, Mohammedanism swept the field and the Dragon drew one third part of the stars of heaven in his trail. A worldly, Christless and lifeless Christianity is the very best material for the Antichrist and the Adversary to turn to his control for the battle of Armageddon.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRIBULATION.

DARK and lurid clouds rise upon the Patmos horizon, and all through the Apocalyptic vision we hear the trumpets of judgment and see the vials of wrath poured out upon the powers of evil. Even in His letters to the seven churches the Lord Jesus continually appears as the holy and heart searching Judge whose eyes are as a flame of fire and His hands stretched out to smite His foes as with a rod of iron and as the broken vessels of the potter. From His awful throne proceed lightnings, and thunders, and voices, and the dreadful forms of the Black Horse of famine, and the Red Horse of war, and the Pale Horse of death go forth at His command while before the dreadful harbingers of His judgment the wicked hide themselves in the rocks of the mountains and cry "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb."

His special judgments are directed against the Wild Beast of wicked political power and the False Prophet of Satanic error. But the wretched multitudes who follow in their ranks are partakers of their plagues. The final conflict comes in the battle of Armageddon, the fall of Babylon, and the destruction of the Wild Beast and his armies in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation.

A series of judgments is described under the figure of the seven trumpets in Revelation 8-II. It would seem that the series must belong to the period immediately following the rapture of the church and the sealing of the tribes of Israel in the seventh chapter of Revelation. Then follow the seven trumpets with their woes and judgments, so strange, so supernatural, so unparalleled by anything this world has ever seen that it requires a great stretch of imagination and intelligence to attempt to interpret them in relation to any ordinary events of history. The first trumpet is followed by a rain of hail and fire mingled with blood destroying a third part of the

vegetation of the earth. The second is followed by a great mountain of fire hurled into the sea until the third part of the sea becomes as blood, the third part of the ships in the sea are destroyed, and the third part of all living creatures in the sea die. The third trumpet brings the descent of a blazing star falling upon the rivers and fountains of water and turning them into wormwood, and poison, and death. The fourth smites the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and blots out one third of the light of heaven, while the earth and heaven resound with the threefold woe which the angel of judgment proclaims as yet to come upon the devoted earth. The fifth trumpet opens the bottomless pit and sends forth a cloud of smoke and darkness and a swarm of destroying locusts like horses prepared for battle, and faces like human warriors, and tails like scorpions, and power to hurt men five months, with a king over them who is himself Apollyon, the angel of the bottomless pit. The sixth trumpet looses the four angels bound by the river Euphrates and sends forth an army of two hundred mil-

lions of demon warriors to cut off one third of the inhabitants of the earth and torment the wicked with their infernal assaults. Then comes an interval with the mysterious vision of the little book, the seven thunders, and the two witnesses; and then comes the seventh trumpet blast proclaiming the final consummation, "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

It is quite certain that this consummation must be the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ and the beginning of the millennial reign because the heavenly chorus proclaims "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art and wast, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets and unto thy saints, and them that fear thy name, both small and great, and shouldst destroy them that destroy the earth."

These trumpet judgments, therefore, must immediately precede the glorious appearing of the Lord, and if so, must follow His Parousia, or secret coming for His saints. If this be so, the strained interpretation, which has applied the last two judgments to actual historical events, such as the Saracenic wars and the Turkish invasion of Asia and Europe, is entirely unnecessary and inadequate. They represent calamities of such a supernal and stupendous character as to make all human history pale before their horrors. They are literal armies from the depths of hell that come forth to torment the human race and to give to the men that have chosen the devil as their leader a full taste of his dire dominion. Already science has shown us that the most dreaded forms of disease come to us through the assaults of actual living germs, armies of destroyers from the bottomless pit that prey on human flesh and blood as well as human souls. If already under the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit and the dispensation of grace these awful forces

can bring such dire calamities to men, and if the demon spirits represented under the figure of frogs in the sixteenth chapter can mobilise the armies of the world for their last great battles, how much more dreadful must be the outlook when the day of grace shall have ended and the world shall have been given over for a season to the power of Satan and the wrath of God! Then indeed shall be a time of tribulation such as was not from the beginning of the world nor ever shall be, and "except the days should be shortened no flesh would be saved."

This time of tribulation looms dark and lurid in the prophecies of Zechariah and Daniel. There it seems to have special reference to Israel and Jerusalem. In Zechariah 18:8 we read "It shall come to pass that in all the land two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried." So dreadful will be this ordeal that only one third of the Jewish nation shall

survive. It shall be allowed to run its course until the nations shall gather against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall fall amid scenes of unprecedented horror and then suddenly "the Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle." The same vision is given in the last chapter of Daniel. "There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time. And at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." There is no doubt, therefore, that the coming tribulation has reference to Israel.

Because of this in the chapter immediately preceding the sounding of the seven trumpets of judgment there is a sudden pause, as we have already seen, and the coming whirlwind is arrested, and the messengers of judgment halted until the elect number of the Jewish people shall have been sealed against destruction in the coming calamities. "Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

(Rev. 7:3). Then comes the record of the tribes that were sealed. No fair interpreter can give a reasonable ground for applying this passage otherwise than literally to the tribes of Israel. This is the divine mark of immunity by which a third part of the nation shall pass through the fire unscathed, and come out to form the nucleus of the Jewish kingdom in the millennial morning. What this seal will involve is not for us to understand any more than we can understand the exact nature of the tribulation judgments. It is something which would secure the lives of the sealed ones through the awful perils and horrors of the tribulation years.

But while the tribulation has primary and direct reference to the literal seed of Abraham, there appears to be no sound reason why we should limit it exclusively to them. In the Olivet messages in Matthew and Luke the Lord Jesus speaks of this tribulation as affecting the whole world, and the picture given us especially in the twenty-first chapter of Luke is international and worldwide. In the twenty-

fourth verse He has just spoken of the times of the Gentiles as reaching their culmination, and then He goes on to say, "There shall be upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." These things evidently are to affect the whole world. It is quite certain also that the waiting saints are to be concerned at least in the beginning of these calamities, for He adds, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

That this tribulation will affect in the most frightful manner all races and tribes and tongues is inevitable, but for the followers of the Lamb and the watching saints who are ready for His coming it need not be more than the first fringes of the awful catastrophe. At the very beginning of it we are encouraged to look up and expect our redemption. And later in the same chapter we are admonished to "watch and

pray always that we may be accounted worthy to escape all these things which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." In other words, we are to hope for our translation before the tribulation shall have reached its flood tide. We are not to go through these horrors, but rather to stand with the Lamb yonder in the glorious meeting in the air. How finely Dr. Bonar has expressed it!

"My hopes are passing upward, onward,
And with my hopes my heart has gone.
My eyes are turning skyward, sunward,
Where glory brightens round yon throne.

"I see the last dark, bloody sunset,
I see the dread Avenger's form,
I hear the Armageddon onset,
But I shall be above the storm.

"There comes a moaning and a sighing;
There comes the death clod's heavy fall;
A thousand agonies of dying,
But I shall be beyond them all."

Beloved, do we not seem to be in the fringes of the tribulation, the first droppings of the fiery storm? Shall we add

Therefore let us watch and always pray
That we may escape that dreadful day,
And before the Son of Man may stand,
In that glorious resurrection band.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FINAL TRIUMPH.

THE Patmos Vision leads through clouds and darkness to final and glorious victory.

The Glorious Epiphany.

The Parousia is the coming of Christ for His saints, but the Epiphany is that which Enoch saw and thus described, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment upon all." The glorious appearing is described by John in the nineteenth chapter. Mounted upon a white horse, the symbol of victory and righteousness, with vesture dipped in blood, many crowns upon His brow and the three glorious names, "Faithful and True," "the Word of God," "King of kings and Lord of lords," He leads the armies of heaven, His translated saints seated upon white horses clothed in fine linen clean and white. Accompanying them are legions of mighty an-

gels, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands.

The Victory at Armageddon.

Against Him are arrayed the powers of earth and hell. There is Antichrist with the embattled hosts of all the world. There is the False Prophet representing all the wisdom, philosophy, and genius of the age. There is Satan himself with the experience of six thousand years, the leader of all the alien hosts. It would seem from other prophecies that they have just won a brief and seeming victory. Jerusalem has fallen, and perhaps they have already marched northward to the plains of Megiddo with the captives and the spoil. The conflict which follows is short and final. The followers of Antichrist are slain, but the leaders of the alien host are hurled alive into the lake of fire, and Satan is taken captive, bound with a mighty chain and imprisoned in the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

The First Resurrection.

There has been prior to this no doubt a partial resurrection and the translation of

the waiting saints. Now it would seem the saints that have stood true during the tribulation shall be caught up to meet their brethren and share in the coming triumph. This resurrection does not include the wicked or the world. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

The Millennial Reign.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God, and which did not worship the wild beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads and in their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Already the Master had promised this to the overcomer. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am sat down with my Father on his throne." This is the reward of the saints. This is the restoration of a sin cursed world. This

is Paradise restored. For this Christ is calling His people today, not to be the subjects but the sovereigns of the coming age.

Three Races .

The population of the earth in the millennial age shall consist of three classes. First there will be the multitudes of men and women who shall still live on after the Lord comes, and constitute the nations of the coming age. They will be human beings just like men and women today, only they shall be the subjects of Christ dominion, and openly at least shall be His followers.

Next there will be the Jewish people who will form the dominant nation with their capital at Jerusalem, and in whom the Lord will fulfil all the promises made to Abraham and David for their literal seed.

Finally, there will be the translated and risen saints who will be the princes and rulers of the millennial age. They will be lifted above the ordinary physical necessities of humanity and shall not marry nor be given in marriage, shall not eat and drink, or at least need to as now, but shall!

have the immortal and resurrection life of glory like the Lord Jesus after His resurrection. They will reside probably in the New Jerusalem, a glorious city descending from the skies and hovering just above the earth, but from it they will constantly visit this terrestrial scene, and like angels now, only visibly and openly, direct its government and life. What a glorious time when humanity shall at last have reached maturity and glory, and the lower forms of life shall no doubt be translated to the higher from time to time!

The Last Revolt.

But once more the dark shadows gather around this fair scene. Satan is to have a last chance, and humanity a final probation. The devil is loosed from the pit, and again appears among men as the adversary and seducer, and alas for Satan, and alas for human nature, he is but too successful in rallying around him a mighty host for the final rebellion on the footstool of creation. There is one more conflict, but it is as brief as it is awful. The fire of God falls

from heaven upon the foe and consumes him. Satan, their leader, perhaps incarnate in human form, is captured once more and now is cast forever into the lake of fire. The dead are raised from the earth and sea, the wicked dead who have slept through the thousand years. And a Great White Throne appeared in the sky from whose terrors earth and heaven flee away. The last judgment begins, the books are opened, the standard is according to their works, and "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The New Creation.

Then comes the birth of a new heaven and earth. The mark of death and resurrection must pass upon the whole universe of God. The Patmos vision describes the ineffable glory of this last aeon in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of Revelation. How can we translate into ordinary terms this sublime vision? There will be stupendous physical changes. There will be no more sea. The law of gravitation will have lost its power, and the streets of the New Jerusalem shall run perpendicularly

as well as horizontally, and the length, and the breadth, and the height of the city shall be equal. There shall be no night there, and there shall be no need of the sun, for God Himself shall be the celestial and unsetting luminary of this glorious world. There will be no more sorrow. There will be no more death. There will be no more curse. There will be no more pain. There will be no more sin. And the tears shall all be wiped away.

The glory and splendor of the New Jerusalem are suggested by its vast proportions. It is a city three hundred and seventy miles each way, but in the form of a cube and reaching aloft as high as its length and breadth. The streets run up and down as well as backwards and forwards. The attraction of earth is gone, and there is no law of gravitation to affect our movements, and our glorified bodies shall pass hither and thither as spontaneously and swiftly as our thoughts now fly throughout the universe. Think of a city whose cubic miles exceed fifty millions! And compare this with the present size of all the land on

the earth's surface which is less than five million square miles, and try to measure the vast proportions of the Father's house with its many mansions. There will be room for ten times the present population of the whole world in the capital alone without any more crowding than the inhabitants of the earth have today.

And this shall be but one of the glorified abodes of the coming aeons. For every star among the millions yonder may be the center of a system of worlds where God's redeemed ones shall have their eternal ministries. For we shall be like Him endowed with His wisdom, power, and glory.

All that He has shall be mine,
All that He is I shall be;
Robed in His glory divine,
I shall be even as He.

This is but a glimpse through the gates ajar, but, oh, as we turn back to Patmos and look within the veil, we may well say like the writer of Bunyan's dream, "Which when I saw, I wished myself among them."

CHAPTER IX.

THE MIDNIGHT CRY.

NO thoughtful person can deny that conditions in this old world are more startling and critical than ever before.

A year ago men were crying "Peace and Safety", building temples of peace, and proclaiming that at last Man had come to his own. Today their temples of peace are tumbling on their heads; the veneer of civilization has been torn off, and there stands revealed the savagery of the Barbarian and the Hun. More than half the world is at war, and the other half is helplessly at the mercy of the combatants. There is "on earth distress of nations with perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are happening on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." It is midnight, and some of the watchers think they can hear the midnight cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him."

Let me offer first some reasons why we

may conclude that the coming of Christ is near, and secondly, point out our true attitude in view of the soon coming of our Lord.

The Midnight Cry.

First, the coming of the Bridegroom does not mean the end of the world. The coming of Jesus to our world nineteen hundred years ago did not end the world. Nor will His next visitation. It will simply take out of the world all the good people who shall be found ready and waiting for Him, and leave the rest of the people with the devil and the antichrist to go through the tempest of the Great Tribulation, a time of trouble such as was not from the beginning, or ever shall be.

Second, the reasonableness of this expectation appears from the fact that the Lord Jesus told us before He went away that He would come back, and made this our one constant expectation. We were also to be looking for it. Death was not so sure. "Watch, therefore, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

Third, the most important public events which were announced by ancient prophets have all been fulfilled, and the stage is cleared for this one supreme event. Four great empires were to rise and fall, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and they have all come and gone. Out of the last ten broken kingdoms were to evolve, and these can all be found on the map of Europe. And in the days of these kingdoms was to fall the stone which would scatter them as the dust to the winds of heaven and bring His kingdom which shall never pass away.

Fourth, a series of judgments was to fall upon the sinful nations before the end. The Ancient of Days was to come and deal with them who had destroyed the earth, and then to hand over the kingdom to the Son of man. For over one hundred years God has been judging wicked nations. The French Revolution on infidel France, the war of the Union on the United States for the sin of slavery, the Indian Mutiny and the South African War on Great Britain for the opium curse she forced on China, the humbling of Russia for her cruelty to the Jews, the ruin

of Belgium for her cruelty to the Congoese, the German War for her rationalism and higher criticism, the crushing of the temporal power of Rome for her long career of sin, and the repeated dismemberment of Turkey for her support of the vile Moslem delusion—these are all great milestones none can miss. And the last has just received new significance by the entrance of Turkey into this present war, her own head-long plunge to her final overthrow. And how solemnly it fulfils the sixth plague in Revelation xvi, the drying up of the Euphrates flood that the way of the Kings of the East, the true leaders of the Orient, may be prepared.

Well may we pause and listen to the whispered warning that follows: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

Fifth, another sign of His immediate coming is a series of preternatural and national convulsions. "There shall be earthquakes in divers places. These are the beginning of sorrows." And sure enough,

seven years ago a circle of earthquakes swept around the world, beginning in southern Italy, sweeping on to the West Indies, then west to San Francisco, south to Valparaiso, and across the Pacific to northern India, Turkestan, and Japan, literally encircling the world.

And today twenty million armed men face each other, and the fields of Europe and Asia are drenched with blood, while all trade, commerce, and industry are paralyzed, and no man can tell when we shall be involved. High authority has even told us in the past week of plans for the conquest of America by seizing, holding, and assessing our great seaport cities.

Is it not true "There shall be on earth distress of nations with perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are happening on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken"? "And when these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads and look up, for your redemption draweth nigh."

Sixth, the Jew is God's greatest sign. Moses told them that if they would not

obey God, seven times of judgment would pass over them. Now a time represents a year of 360 days, prophetic, and seven times equals 2520 years. It is a startling fact that 2520 years from the first captivity of the Jews, 606, brings us to 1914, when we may expect Israel's trials to begin to reach their end. This will not all happen in a day. It is the beginning of a process, but the indicator points to today. And the wonderful movement in Israel in connection with Zionism and the return of the Jews adds infinite force to it, while the Turkish war, the seizing of Cyprus by England, and the probable including of Syria and Palestine in the issues and interests of this war may well make us watch and pray.

Seventh, there is much more of which we might speak did time permit. There is the progress of human knowledge which Daniel said would mark the last days. There is the failure of human governments calling for earth's true King. There is the apostasy of many in the church from loyalty to the Bible, the Blood, the Virgin birth, the supernatural power of God. There is the

portentous growth of human wickedness, divorce, intemperance, lust, graft, violence. There is the wonderful revival of Holiness as the Bride puts on her wedding garments. There is the amazing spread of worldwide evangelisation as the church goes forth in a final effort to give the gospel as a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come. And there is the strange and worldwide expectation in the heart of Moslem, Jew and saint that some One is coming soon. Oh, yes, there are voices in the air.

The Note of Preparation.

Our Attitude in view of the near coming of the Lord. Dear friends, if these things are so, what does it mean for us? It means that if you are followers of Christ, you are to prepare to meet Him by making sure that you have on the wedding garments of His righteousness, and the Oil of the Holy Spirit in your heart; that your life is adjusted to the great change, your home in order, and your accounts all ready for your Lord's inspection.

And if anybody you love is outside the circle of His saved ones that you be filled

with deep concern by prayer, by influence, and by holy endeavor to reach and bring them to Christ. The apostle Peter has told us that the reason He delays His coming is because He is not willing that any should perish. There is some one dear to you He wishes to have in that holy gathering. Oh, can you bear to think that you shall look from the heights of His glorious presence on that wretched crowd that shall stand outside the shut door and wave farewell to some horror stricken face that you love better than your life. I cannot. I think I would ask Him to let me go back through the Tribulation night and hold on till I bring them home.

Dr Gordon once told in my pulpit the story of two young girls, sisters, much attached to each other, but far apart in their religious interest and sympathy. The Christian girl was deeply concerned for the salvation of her sister. One night, as they came home together from a religious service, where the preacher had dwelt on the text, "One shall be taken and the other left" she was so deeply moved that she

could not hold back her tears and earnestly pleaded with her sister to give her heart to God. She could not bear the thought of their eternal separation, but she was only spurned. As they lay down together, the thoughtless one was soon asleep, the other drenched her pillow with bitter tears, and after a while, unable to bear the agony, she rose from the bed and retired to an adjoining room where she lay before the Lord in agony and prayer for a long time. Suddenly the sister awoke and found herself alone. The thought flashed upon her, Has the Lord really come, and has she been taken and I left? The thought filled her with dismay. She sought for her sister through the room but found no trace of her. At last she burst into bitter weeping and fell on her knees and for the first time really prayed. After a while she heard a low wailing and sobbing and hastening to the room was surprised to find it was her sister. Together they wept and knelt and prayed, and before they closed their eyes again they knew that if He should come, they would part no more. Beloved, are you doing your

best to bring your loved ones with you to that heaven which will be as Samuel Rutherford said, "ten heavens with them, but almost hell without them."

And if you are not saved, O man or woman, it means that you lose not a moment in turning "to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come." This does not mean a message of wild fire and fanaticism that would have you neglect any human occupation or obligation, but that you should first make sure of your citizenship in the coming kingdom and then turn all the strength of your life to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

This old world will be a poor place to live in after the Lord shall have taken out of it all the good and holy and given it over to the judgments of heaven, the power of Satan, and the dominion of the Antichrist. We know a little now of living under a government of oppression, corruption, and graft. But what will it be when even our

public worship shall be subject to the control of the Superman, when for every sort of business we shall require to wear a badge and have a license from his government, and when all that refuse to wear his mark and worship his image shall be subject to persecution and martyrdom. Earth's darkest days are just ahead, and alas, for those that shall have to pass through that dread tribulation! It was never meant for the followers of the Lamb. For them the Master's warning was, "Watch and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man." Our place is yonder with the Son of man, not here with the devil and his angels.

The Lord Jesus is passing through the world and gathering out His friends before that dreadful day. He is knocking at our door as the lowly Nazarene, but soon He will come as the King of kings and Lord of lords. In the second Psalm we have a sublime vision of His final victory. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron. Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's ves-

sel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling." Then suddenly there comes a pause in the advent procession, and He seems to bend from His chariot, stretch out His hands in mercy to sinful men, and offer one more appeal. "Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little." He offers rebels and sinners the kiss of reconciliation and love, but the day of grace will soon be gone, and then we must meet Him as our Judge.

It is said that once a great squadron of cavalry were sweeping across a park in Vienna on parade when suddenly a little child straggled from the crowd under the separating rope, and with a suppressed cry of horror the crowd saw that she was in the path of the advancing horsemen. A moment more, and she would have been trampled under their feet, but with amazing skill the leader galloped out in front, suddenly stopped his horse, leaned over from his neck, grasped the little one with his hand

and bore her up to his arms in safety while a great cheer of admiration burst from the multitude.

It would almost seem as if the march of the Advent hosts had already begun. In a little while every adversary will be trodden beneath their victorious feet, but a moment longer the day of mercy waits and the Son of God stretches out His gracious hands and cries, "Be ye reconciled to God."

A great Russian emperor used to go among his people in disguise to test their real character. One night he wandered from door to door in a wintry storm on the streets of Moscow, and as a tramp begged for shelter and food only to find himself repulsed with harsh neglect. At last he found one open door, and the humble peasant welcomed him, offered him a pallet of straw, a crust of bread, a cup of water and a heartfelt welcome, but added, "I can give you nothing more, for my wife is sick. A babe has just been born, and my attention must be given to her."

The emperor slept on that pallet of straw with the joy of knowing that he had found

a man, and at dawn he took his leave with many thanks for the humble hospitality of his hosts. That afternoon a royal cavalcade swept up to that door, and as the peasant hurried to the narrow street, the emperor was standing before him with all his retinue. The man fell on his face in terror and asked what he had done to bring such a visitation. The emperor raised him up and said, "Nothing, my good man, but entertain your emperor. It was I that slept on that pallet of straw and enjoyed your hospitality. You thought I was a tramp, but it was your emperor you entertained, and he has come to reward you. Take this bag of gold for the wants of your wife and home, and when your new born child is old enough, bring him to me; and I will give him a place of honor in my service; and if you ever need a friend, call on the poor tramp that slept in that corner last night."

Beloved friend, a lowly Stranger is passing up and down your streets, and often knocking at your door and giving you a chance to entertain Him. Some day His

chariot will sweep down the avenues of the skies while angels will wait upon Him, and stars and constellation shall light His way. Then you would give the universe for one smile of recognition from His face. Will you meet it in that day, or will you stand without while the door is shut and "He from within shall answer I never knew you?"

In the last verses of the sixth chapter of Revelation there is a dramatic scene. All the signs of the Lord's coming are in evidence in earth and air, and the wicked are beginning to call on the rocks and mountains to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. It is the coming of the great Tribulation. But suddenly it is halted by a voice from heaven, and the angels of judgment are forbidden to hurt the earth or the sea until first the servants of God have been sealed in their foreheads and the waiting saints have been taken out of the coming storm. First, an elect company of the tribes of Israel are marked for immunity from the Tribulation. They are to go through it, but go through it unscathed because the

seal of God is upon their brows. Next, we behold a mighty company out of every kindred and tongue clothed with white robes, with palms in their hands, before the throne and the Lamb. Surely these are the translated saints. "These are they that have come up out of the great Tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Oh, how many that we love will be among them. Friend, will you be there? Shall I?

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